

ILLINOIS STATE PARKS

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

ILLINOIS STATE PARKS

NATIONAL PARKS.

Our National Government owns fourteen National Parks, with a total area of nearly five million acres, all under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. It also owns thirty-one National monuments, of which nineteen are in the Department of the Interior, ten in the Department of Agriculture, and two in the War Department.

Just where the boundary lies between national and state parks it is not easy to determine. Many of the national parks are in sparsely settled regions where the local communities could not provide the care and protection necessary even were they disposed to do so. Usually their selection has been based on scenic attractions so unusual that the appeal they make is not local but nation wide. Few state parks are important enough to attract visitors from a long distance. In general, the nation cares for the largest and most important, the states for those of less scenic value or to preserve some historic site of local interest.

NEW YORK PARKS.

New York has the best developed state park system and has under its care reservations at Niagara Falls, Stony Point, Watkins Glen, the Great Gorge of the Genesee River, the Palisades of the Hudson, immense tracts in the Adirondacks and in Rockland and Orange Counties. In addition it has cared for many survivals from its Colonial and Revolutionary past.

EARLY ILLINOIS AS DESCRIBED BY TRAVELERS.

Suppose we begin the discussion of what Illinois is doing in the same line with a few quotations from literary visitors to Illinois prior to the middle of the last century who saw the state in its primitive condition.

The early French explorers such as La Salle, Marquette, Hennepin, and Joutel, each gave terse and explanatory sentences concerning the country of the Illinois, which are often quoted. Said Joutel: "It may be truly affirmed that the country of the Illinois enjoys all that can make it accomplished, not only as to ornament but also for its plentiful production of all things required for the support of human life."

The condensed Tonty: "As for the country of the Illinois, the river runs one hundred leagues from Fort St. Louis to where it falls into the Mississippi. Thus it may be said to contain some of the finest lands ever seen. The climate is the same as that of Paris."

Harriet Martineau visited Chicago in 1836 and made an excursion inland as far as Joliet, taking a route on the west side of the Des Plaines valley. After crossing the river, probably at Lyons, she wrote: "As we proceeded, the scenery became more and more like what all travelers compare it to be—a boundless English Park. The grass was wilder, the occasional footpath not so trim, and the single trees less majestic; but no park ever displayed anything equal to the grouping of the trees within the windings of the blue, brimming river Aux Plaines."

Fourteen years later, in 1850, Fredrika Bremer, the Swedish novelist, spent some days in Chicago and passed through northern Illinois to Galena. To see the prairies near the city, she was driven out 18 miles as far as a tree covered elevation, perhaps Hinsdale; she wrote: "The whole state of Illinois is one vast rolling prairie (that is to say a plain of low, wave-like hills). . . . My new friends wished me to pass a day of prairie life. We drove out early in the morning, three families in four carriages. The day was glorious; the sky of brightest blue, the sun of purest gold, and the air full of vitality, but calm; and there, in that brilliant light, stretched itself far, far out into the infinite, as far as the eye could discern, an ocean-like extent, the waves of which were sunflowers, asters, and gentians. The plain was splendid with them, especially with the sunflowers, which were frequently four yards high and stood far above the head of our tallest gentleman.

"We ate our dinner in a little wood which lay like a green shrub upon that treeless flowery plain. It was an elevation, and from this point the prairie stretched onward its softly waving extent to the horizon. . . . The sun-bright soil remained here still in its primeval greatness and magnificence, unchecked by human hands, covered with its flowers, protected and watched alone by the eye of the sun. And the bright sunflowers nodded and beckoned in the wind as if inviting millions of beings to the festival set out on the rich table of the earth. To me it was a festival of light. It was really a great and glorious sight; to my feeling, less common and grander than Niagara itself."

So much for two views at Chicago's doorstep. Seven years earlier than Fredrika Bremer, in 1843, Margaret Fuller made her often referred to visit to the Rock River Country, and of that lovely valley she said:

"Of Illinois in general, it has often been remarked that it bears the character of country which has been inhabited by a nation skilled like the English in all the ornamental arts of life, especially in landscape gardening. That the villas and castles seem to have been burnt, the enclosures taken down, but the velvet lawns, the flower gardens, the stately parks, scattered at graceful intervals by the decorous hand of art, the frequent deer and the peaceful herd of cattle that make pictures of the plain, all suggest more of the masterly mind of man, than the prodigal, but careless, motherly love of nature. Especially is this true of the Rock River Country. The river flows sometime through these parks and lawns, then betwixt high bluffs, whose grassy ridges are covered with fine trees or broken with crumbling stone, that easily assumes the forms of buttress, arch, and clustered columns."

Perhaps the best description of the unspoiled prairies is that quotation from Captain Basil Hall, an English traveller, given in Gerhard's "Illinois as it Is," published in 1857. Here is a part of the passage only:

"The charm of a prairie" (and he is speaking of the Grand Prairie which began beyond the Kankakee River and extended indefinitely southward) "consists in its extension—its green, flowery carpet, its undulating surface and the skirt of forest whereby it is surrounded; the latter feature being of all others the most significant and expressive, since it characterizes the landscape and defines the form and boundary of the plain. If the prairie is little, its greatest beauty consists in the vicinity of the encompassing edge of forests, which may be compared to the shores of a lake, being intersected with many deep, inward bends, as so many inlets and at intervals projecting very far, not unlike a promontory or protruding arm of land. These projections sometimes so closely approach each other that the traveller passing through between them may be said to walk in the midst of an alley overshadowed by the forest before he enters again upon another broad prairie. Where the plain is extensive, the delineation of the forest in the far background appears as would a misty coast at some distance upon the ocean. The eye sometimes surveys the green prairie without discovering on the illimitable plain a tree or bush, or any other object, save the wilderness of flowers and grass, while on other occasions the view is enlivened by the groves dispersed like islands over the plain, or by a solitary tree rising above the wilderness. The resemblance to the sea which some of these prairies exhibited was really most striking. . . . There is one in particular, near the middle of the Grand Prairie, if I recollect rightly, where the ground happened to be of the rolling character above alluded to and where, excepting in the article of color, and that was not widely different from the tinge of some seas, the similarity was so striking that I almost forgot where I was."

These brief literary glimpses of an original beauty fast disappearing are the prelude to the discussion of State Parks in Illinois. As a matter of fact, it is a mistake to use the plural in this connection. There is only one—Starved Rock Park. The question immediately resolves itself into these two: Should there be any more. If so, where should they be located?

HISTORIC SITES.

If we shall take an inventory of what the state has set apart as state reservations, and of the historical monuments to which she has contributed, and list the historical markers and monuments erected by private funds, the result will be somewhat as follows:

In 1903 the Legislature made the first appropriation of money to pay for acreage to preserve a historical site. This included a few acres near Metropolis in Massac County, where Fort Massac was located.

Since there was some occupation of this site by the French, who connected it with Kaskaskia by a blazed roadway through the forest, and also by the English, in the thirteen year interval between the French and American occupancy, under the last of whom it was rebuilt, it connects all three, French, English, and American, in its past. There is no record of its use after the War of 1812. The Daughters of the American Revolution have emphasized the site by the erection of a monument.

In 1911, the Illinois Park Commission was created, and its first purchase was 280 acres at Starved Rock in La Salle County at a cost of \$146,000. Since then the commission, acting under powers granted in the bill, has secured over five hundred additional acres, until we now have a park of eight hundred fifty-five acres, with prospect of further enlargement.

The commission has also acquired ten acres at Fort Chartres in Randolph County, which will preserve from absolute despoliation what yet remains of the most complete and costliest of the French forts in the upper Mississippi Valley. The one structure still standing is the old powder magazine, which is in a fair state of preservation and is the oldest building in the state. Most of the outer stone walls of the fort, which were originally two feet thick and fifteen feet high, have either been carted away by people who treated them as a stone quarry, or else were undermined by the Mississippi whose near encroachment caused its abandonment as a fort by the English a few years after its conquest by them. Fort Chartres has little scenic value, is not easily accessible, and is not likely to be often visited.

Some years ago, when it was evident that the Mississippi would gradually destroy the Kaskaskia village site, the French Cemetery was removed and a suitable monument erected at state expense.

An unusual memorial in Chicago is the cross erected through the initiative of Miss Valentine Smith at the foot of Robey Street and the Chicago River to mark the place where Father Marquette spent his one winter (1674-75) in Chicago.

There have been few serious conflicts between the whites and the Indians on Illinois soil. One of the most important occurred in 1730. In that year the French decided to strike a stinging blow at the Fox Indians, then overrunning Northern Illinois, and who seem to have been the Villistas of their time. One body of French troops was sent up from Fort Chartres—250 miles away—which united with another detachment of French from Fort Miami on the St. Joseph River in Michigan—one hundred fifty miles away. The two combined forces with Indian allies made an attacking force of nearly two thousand. They accomplished their purpose and slaughtered between three hundred and four hundred warriors, women, and children—perhaps the most sanguinary battle ever fought within the state's confines. Just where the event took place is not agreed upon by the historians. The late Mr. J. F. Steward spent much time and money in an attempt to prove that a small hill just below Plano, Kendall County, Illinois, was the right location, and there caused to be placed and properly

inscribed a huge boulder. The ground was deeded to a school district to prevent its being sold for taxes. If Historians Quaife and Alvord who have devoted more time to Illinois history than any other moderns, ever find a better authenticated spot the boulder can be moved.

The farthestmost western outpost of America's far flung battle line in the War of 1812 was Fort Edwards on the Mississippi, at what is now Warsaw, Illinois. This was located and established by young Major Zachary Taylor and was maintained as a fort until 1824. On the centennial date of its founding the state erected on its site a fifty foot high granite monument which all river travelers can see from the boat decks as they pass.

Mention of the Fort Dearborn massacre monument at 18th Street and the Lake, Chicago, must be made in connection with the War of 1812. This was a graceful memorial erected by private citizens.

Fort Armstrong, on the Island between Davenport, Iowa, and Rock Island, Illinois, dating from 1816, has been marked by a monument erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution and by a block house replica placed there by the Rock Island County Historical Society. Near by encounters in the War of 1812 on Campbell Island and Credit Island have been or soon will be marked. Blackhawk's long time residence at Rock Island is to be commemorated by a suitable monument contributed by the same society.

Blackhawk's war was almost a bloodless contest in Illinois, except for the few careless men who lost their lives in the Stillman Valley encounter. The state has contributed a monument to mark that disaster.

At this same time a group of Indians surprised a happy settlement on Indian Creek, a La Salle County tributary of Fox River. The massacre which followed was about the only one of its kind in Illinois history, and merits the substantial monument which has recently been erected there by privately subscribed funds.

In connection with the Blackhawk War incidents should be mentioned the Indian statue, forty-eight feet high, erected in 1911 at Oregon on a bluff overlooking the beautiful Rock River Valley. Doubtless the Blackhawk tradition had something to do with the inspiration which caused its production. Lorado Taft and his financial aids have—but why not quote from Edgar A. Bancroft's dedicatory address? "There the sculptor has placed imperishably the Indian—not sullen; not resentful; not despondent; not surrendering; but simple; unflinching; erect; with the pathos of the past in his face, the tragedy of the future in his eyes, but with the dauntless courage of a man in his figure and in his whole attitude."

Shabbona, also of the Blackhawk War period, has been honored with a monument and a small park bearing his name some twenty miles from Ottawa, Illinois.

The state has from time to time contributed memorials to certain of her distinguished citizens, such as to Elisha P. Lovejoy at Alton, to Stephen A. Douglas in Chicago, and to Pierre Menard and Abraham Lincoln at Springfield.

Three quite different reminders from the others are the tablet at Galesburg and the inscribed granite boulders at Freeport and Ottawa, marking the places of delivery of the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates.

Very recently, at Naples in Scott County, an inscribed boulder was placed at the point where in July, 1861, Colonel Ulysses Simpson Grant encamped with his first command, the 21st Regiment of Illinois Volunteers, which was on its way from Springfield to the front.

The state, while not the owner or caretaker of the Lincoln house in Springfield and the Grant house in Galena, has, at least in more than one instance, contributed to the maintenance of these two historic houses.

There are numerous monuments in the state erected to the citizen dead of the Civil War. Possibly none surpasses in artistic merit the Oregon memorial by Lorado Taft, dedicated in 1916. An artistic rival exists, however, in the memorial erected in 1915 at Danville to the memory of the soldiers of the American Revolution. The design, a drinking fountain, is by Daniel Chester French. A part of the cost of this work was born by the State and the balance by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This completes my historical list; it is not exhaustive, but covers in the main whatever has been done to preserve, perpetuate, or mark historically important places in Illinois. Barring political conventions which have been history makers of national concern, very little but minor matters have ever taken place on Illinois soil, and few historic sites are left to be provided for.

PREHISTORIC INDIAN REMAINS.

Archaeologically, however, Illinois is in the first rank. Peculiarly rich, her bluffs and valleys and prairie groves are marked by mound builders' remains. They have never been scientifically studied; they have never been exactly mapped. Many and many a mound has been vandalized and used for every purpose except preservation. Farm houses and barns have been built on them and their surface plowed and tilled assiduously. In the Mississippi bottom opposite St. Louis is the famous Monk's or Cahokia Mound, the largest structure of prehistoric Indian life in the United States. It is larger than the pyramid of Ghizeh and altogether as wonderful, considering that it is in Illinois. The Illinois State Park Commission has urged and is urging every legislature to pass a bill for its preservation. Legislators do not seem to be interested in archaeology. In 1914 a Cahokia Mound association was formed in St. Louis, but their endeavor is to get the United States to add this to its long list of monuments. Nothing has been accomplished.

This great temple mound, one thousand feet long and half as wide, one hundred feet high, covering five or six acres, is the largest in a group of fifty or sixty, the others of which can be seen from its top. The material of which it is composed was brought at least three miles. Although placed on the alluvial bottom of the river, stiff clay from the bluffs was used as building material.

Fifteen miles to the east of this great group, on the border of the high open prairie in St. Clair County, is Emerald Mound, the most perfectly preserved mound in the state—a truncated pyramid with a base of two hundred twenty-five feet and a top of one hundred fifty feet. Unlike the Cahokia Mound, its angles are sharp, regular, and well preserved.

Ohio has done much to care for her remarkable prehistoric remains, but how did she get her start? Years ago her serpent mound was threatened with destruction, and money to purchase it, through the activity of a Harvard professor, was raised among the women of Boston. To-day it is owned by the State of Ohio, simply because Professor Putnam of Harvard at the request of the women purchasers deeded it to the state.

Will it be necessary to form a Cahokia Mound Preservation Society in Boston to secure to Illinois posterity the preservation of the largest mass of earth artificially heaped up anywhere in the world? I am not sure that even under the present distressing conditions, if a subscription to a fund for its preservation were opened in Berlin or London, in Paris or Vienna, the money would not stand a better chance of being raised than it would from a modern Illinois legislature and Governor.

Is there any danger? A street car company has made tentative offers to buy it for fill. Recall what happened to the Beardstown mound, the next in size to Cahokia in the state. As long ago as 1837, that town began to use the clay of which it was composed to surface its sandy streets and roads. By 1850 it was nearly gone. To-day there is scarcely an outline of its location visible. Harriet Martineau's visit to Joliet was partly to see a similar mound which has long ago been put to practical uses.

Archaeologists have gone so far as to roughly classify the Illinois mounds into four: the burial mounds; the temple mounds, to which class Cahokia and Emerald mounds belong; the stone grave burial mounds (that is, a dirt mound in which the dead were protected by a sort of stone sarcophagous); and, in the northern part of the state, effigy mounds, the best known of which is the turtle mound in Rockford, protected on the private grounds of the Beattie family for seventy years. There is scarcely one of the hundred Illinois counties which has not some of these reminders of the Illinois of long ago. No intervention by the state is more needed than such as would preserve some at least of the more remarkable mounds.

ILLINOIS FORESTS.

We do not often think of Illinois as particularly rich in forest areas, and yet her lower border lands were once the cream of the country and a big tree region second only to the Pacific Coast.

Robert Ridgway, a naturalist, in the early seventies wrote as follows: "That portion of the Wabash River and its tributaries lying south of latitude 38 degrees, 25 minutes, contains a *sylva* peculiarly

rich and also remarkable for combining within one area many of the characteristic trees, as well as other plants, of the northern, southern, and southwestern portions of the United States, besides supporting the vegetation common to the whole Atlantic region or 'Eastern Province.'

"In the heavy forests of the bottom-lands, which in many places have entirely escaped the ravages of the ax, the magnitude of the timber is such as is unknown to the scant woods of the eastern states. . .

"Of the ninety to a hundred species of the lower Wabash Valley, thirty are known to reach or exceed the height of one hundred feet, while four of them (sycamore, tulip-poplar, pecan, and sweet gum) attain or go beyond an elevation of one hundred and seventy-five feet. The maximum elevation of the tallest sycamore and tulip trees is probably not less than two hundred feet.

"Going into these woods we find symmetrical, solid trunks, six feet and upwards in diameter and fifty feet or more long, to be not uncommon in half a dozen or more species; while now and then we happen on one of those old sycamores, for which the rich alluvial bottoms of the western rivers are so famous, with a trunk thirty or even forty, possibly fifty or sixty, feet in circumference, while perhaps a hundred feet overhead stretch out its great white arms, each as large as the biggest trunks themselves of most eastern forests, and whose massive head is one of these which lifts itself so high above the surrounding tree tops."

In 1880, of the one hundred and two counties in Illinois, sixty-two were from fifteen to twenty-seven per cent. in forests and forty from six to eight per cent.

It is estimated now that the present forest area of Illinois is about two million acres, or five and one-half per cent. of the total land area.

The woodland is disappearing swiftly, and therefore efforts to preserve some of the beauty of her country-side, which made such an impression on the visitors who saw it as it was when the white men came, will soon have to be carried out. This is no plea for the economic value to Illinois of forest preserves, to induce rain fall, to conserve moisture, to cover the hill sides and prevent erosion; it is a plea merely to preserve the beauty of the state by lessening its forest destruction. What the difficulties in accomplishing this are can be illustrated by the trials and tribulations that have befallen the attempt to have the White Pine Forest in Ogle County made a state park. Here is the third highest point in Illinois, containing the only group of native white pine in the state—the southern limit of that kingly tree, which sweeps northward to Hudson Bay. Altogether there are about five hundred acres of beautiful forest in this tract, mostly hardwood, such as can nowhere be duplicated in the state. Thirteen years ago a bill was passed by both houses of the state legislature appropriating for its purchase \$30,000. Governor Yates vetoed it on the score of economy. Bills have been introduced at other sessions but none has come before a Governor. No bill has been introduced during Governor Dunne's term, as he explained to the White Pine Forest Association officials that he would veto any bill for this purchase should it ever

come to him. To-day it would take twice as much money to buy the tract as was originally asked.

There are many other counties which have forest survivals suitable for state parks, as for instance the towering bluff above Savannah on the Mississippi in Mt. Carroll County, and a forested valley near Mt. Carroll. This particular county has a well organized association, and it is expected to make a strong fight at the next legislature to pass a state park bill. Joe Davis County, next north from Mt. Carroll, has about the finest scenery in the state; it was all originally wooded; is hilly and broken, and contains one spot at the junction of the two branches of the Apple River where there is a gorge two hundred and fifty feet deep and not more than ten to fifteen rods wide—this is two and a half times as high as any similar formation at Starved Rock. All of this lends itself most admirably to park purposes. A thousand acres here could be bought for a ridiculous sum. Also in the same county is Charles Mound, as the cloud capped pinnacle is named, which is the highest spot in the state. Now, if there is anything which "Illinois,—Illinois," ought to do it is to surround that height with a park and prevent some railway company from carrying it off.

Mr. Spencer Ewing, one of Bloomington's most enlightened citizens, urges that some of the twenty-five hundred acres of forest lands near his city still held by descendants of Mr. Isaac Funk, who entered most of it from the government on Mexican land warrants, should be preserved. The owners, being hard-headed practical people, are using it as they need.

Not a few are quite familiar with the Higginbotham forest at Joliet. No park or forest reservation discussion can fail to give that honorable mention.

Some state park enthusiasts go so far as to advocate preserving a piece of unspoiled prairie. That is rather difficult to find, but a post graduate prairie flower specialist at the University of Chicago, Mr. H. C. Sampson, astonished me by the information that within the city limits of Chicago, at the corner of South 48th Avenue and 87th Street, was a whole section of land—six hundred and forty acres—which had never had a house on it, and only one hundred acres of it had ever been plowed. Altogether there are two thousand acres of natural prairie at that border point of our densely populated city. Some of this ought certainly to be taken over by the Outer Belt Park System of Cook County.

A state park survey would consider also the sand dunes region near the upper Mississippi in Illinois, a worthless but picturesque bit of desert, and the unrivalled and unique Lotus flower beds near Antioch in Lake County.

ONE HUNDRED STATE PARKS.

I have a solution to offer on the State Park problem. The main difficulty seems to be to get first in the public's eye the need of preserving something of the beauty we still have with us, and next of

persuading the people in one part of the state that they will benefit by taxing themselves to make a park a hundred miles distant. There is merit in this last objection. A solution suggests itself to me. It is often easier to do big things than it is little ones; it would be better to have a state park in each county in the state. Leaving out Cook, which is solving its own problem, and the smallest county, we might have one hundred parks say of one thousand acres each. The log-rolling method of the River and Harbor Bill legislation ought to apply equally well here. Each state legislator should become vitally interested; his district would be in it to get something—and he ought to get it—beauty should not be too far distant. There are plenty of bleak and barren spaces in the state. Some counties are naturally almost treeless; in such cases forestry could create a prairie grove or perhaps utilize the waste ground along the highways. It would be a wonderful thing if there were long timber-belts, serving both as wind breaks and for beauty, paralleling many of Illinois' flat and forbidding prairie roadways.

One hundred county parks of one thousand acres each would make altogether one hundred thousand acres. The Yosemite National Park in California contains eight hundred thousand acres alone. Our neighbor Wisconsin has set aside one single tract of four hundred thousand acres. Would one hundred thousand acres be too much for rich, prosperous Illinois? Most of the land suitable for parks has little value for farming purposes. The best sites are the banks along the streams just where nature put the trees originally.

Let us see how it would work out near Chicago. If we begin with the Fox River in Lake County and follow it through its windings in McHenry, Kane, Kendall, to its mouth at Ottawa in La Salle, we find the roads follow the stream. Sometimes they are only a few feet away and at others a quarter of a mile distant. Often the roads are twenty to fifty feet above the stream. The space between the roads and the river was originally forested, and some surviving or second-growth trees still mark every mile of the hundred and fifty included. A county park scheme would permit utilizing this river bank. Under a forester's care, it would soon come back to true forest conditions. State roads are now under way, and soon we would have without excessive taxation a boulevard at small cost, beautiful every mile of the way. The same principle could be applied from Ottawa all down the Illinois Valley to St. Louis. Almost identical conditions exist in the Rock River Valley, along the Kankakee, the Sangamon, the Vermillion, and many other streams. It would transform the state highways from places one wanted to get over as quickly as possible into one long succession of delightful views, and make lingering and slow motoring a thing to be desired.

THE INDIANA DUNE COUNTRY.

If some one should tell us that thirty miles from where we now are was a Cathedral of Dreams, which had been a thousand years in building, which was a marvel of lofty spires and stone carvings, was adorned with beautiful statues, had windows filled with wonderful glass, chapel walls decorated by the masters of the centuries, and that the whole structure revealed throughout the artistic excellence of a nation long practiced in the making of beautiful things—if, taken altogether it was one of the most precious buildings in the world, and then, if we heard that the worshippers had moved away and no one was left to care for it, and that a stone crushing plant had taken an option on it to use its stone as material out of which to build roads, would we not think all the people hereabouts were barbarians if they did not bestir themselves to raise a fund to preserve so precious a work of art?

But within forty miles of us lies the Dune Country of Indiana, which represents the work of one hundred times one thousand years, by such artists as the glaciers, water, wind, and sun, until you find there a park perfect, beautiful; a fairy land; a land of dreams; a land of remoteness; a land of solitudes; a land of long beaches; a land on whose frail shore strong waves beat at times with a thunderous roar; a land so fair and fine no city park could be made to equal it by the expenditure of countless millions. This wondrous eighteen mile stretch is for sale,—who buys? Shall it be an armor plate concern who will when in possession destroy it all? Shall Indiana and Illinois together join in an agitation for its preservation, in the event that the movement to make it a national park shall fail?

William Kent's fine act in giving the Muir Woods to San Francisco should stimulate imitators in Chicago to give five or ten thousand acres of the Dune Country to state care forevermore.

It would be difficult to find a better closing than the following eloquent plea for preserving out-door beauty from the pen of our own Jens Jensen, whose appreciation is based on international observation and knowledge:

"Did it ever occur to you that our Illinois landscape is as rich in beauty as the best in the world? Have you ever studied the charm of our woods in winter, their beauty of composition, of color and texture; the brown of the oak, the purple of the crabapple and plum, the gray of poplar and hawthorne, the pink and red of the dogwood, and the different shades of the grasses? A poem of strength and beauty is this winter picture. And then, when the dawn of the year arrives, when the air tingles with the fragrance of new-born life, when the crust of Mother Earth is broken, the winter landscape takes on its bridal gown and appears reborn in charm and beauty. Only fairies may tread upon the soft carpet of delicate flowers covering the forest floor. The plum, arrayed in purest white, lightens up the prairie way beyond the forest border.

"Crab apples clad in delicate pink and hawthorne dressed in garments of white bring joy into the hearts of prairie folks, a living joy,

and lasting, which is finding expression in the art of our people. Again, when summer is waning and the first waves of crisp air have touched the leaves of Mother Earth's green mantle, upon a stroke from the hand of the Great Magician the landscape bursts into fire, flaming out with the sunset over the prairies. The festival in which the out-of-door partakes before bidding us goodbye to winter's sleep, this color splendor of our woodlands, is equaled in no other land.

"All this beauty is our own, pure and unadulterated. It is the shrine at which the poet and artist worship. It is the spring from which they drink eternal youth. Here the soul is touched with divine fire; and from here their messages to their people are filled with sincerity and purity.

"And so it is the very soul of our country that we are seeing threatened. It is pleading for its life; pleading for recognition in town and country. It is our only hope for any expression of our own in art and literature.

"Is it worth saving? Shall we build our homes and live our lives amid such surroundings?"

